

# NIETZSCHE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN EXPERIENCE

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AS FAR as I can see, there are two mistakes that warp Nietzsche's thinking and become fatal to it. The first error is a complete and, we must assume, a willful misconception of the relationship of power between instinct and intellect on earth, as if the latter were dangerously in the dominance and it were high time to save instinct from it. If one considers how completely will, impulse, and self-interest dominate and suppress intellect, reason, and the sense of justice in the great majority of people, the opinion that intellect must be overcome by instinct becomes absurd. This opinion can be explained only historically, by a momentary philosophical situation needing a corrective to saturation with rationalism, and it immediately demands a counter-correction.

As though it were necessary to defend life against spirit! As though there were the slightest danger that things on earth would ever become too spiritual! The simplest generosity should be enough to make us shield

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IN THIS second part of his essay—which can be read independently of the first—THOMAS MANN considers the basic errors of Nietzsche's thought, which were foreshadowings of the anti-rationalism and brutishness of Hitler's fascism. But he also sees in Nietzsche insights which may be prophetic of a newer, higher humanism. In the previous part, published in the January issue of COMMENTARY, Dr. Mann pointed out the effect of Nietzsche's disease on his thought, holding it responsible for some of the exaggeration and hysteria in Nietzsche's writing, his alternations between exultation and despair. Nevertheless, he finds, Nietzsche's work possesses a fundamental unity that is given it by the emphasis on these *leitmotifs*: life, culture, consciousness, art, nobleness, morality, instinct. Nietzsche saw life and instinct as opposed to consciousness and morality, and attacked the two latter as being hostile, not only to life, but also to culture and art. Dr. Mann affirms that there is something in man higher than will and instinct, namely *spirit*, itself the supreme expression of life and nature. It is through the spirit that life and nature can criticize themselves—and Nietzsche as well.

and protect the weak little flame of reason, of spirit, of justice, instead of aligning ourselves with power and instinctual life and indulging in a corybantic over-estimation of life's "negated" side, crime—the idiocy of which we contemporaries have just experienced. Nietzsche behaved—and in doing so he has caused a great deal of harm—as though it were moral consciousness that, like Mephistopheles, threatened life with its cold, Satanic fist. For my part, I can see nothing particularly Satanic in the idea (an old idea of mystics) that life might one day be eliminated by the human spirit—something still a long, an interminably long, way off. The danger that life of itself will eliminate itself from this planet by perfecting the atomic bomb is considerably greater. But even that is improbable. Life is a cat with nine lives, and so is humanity.

THE second of Nietzsche's errors is the utterly false opposition he sets up between life and morality. The truth is that they belong together. Ethics support life, and a moral man is a real citizen of life—perhaps a little boring but extremely useful. The real opposition is between ethics and *aesthetics*. Not morality, but beauty is bound up with death, as many poets have said and sung—and how should Nietzsche have not known that? "When Socrates and Plato started talking about truth and justice," he says somewhere, "they were Greeks no longer, but Jews—or I don't know what." Well, thanks to their morality, the Jews have proven themselves to be good and tenacious children of life. They, together with their religion, their faith in a just God, have survived thousands of years, whereas that dissolute little nation of aesthetes and artists, the Greeks, very quickly disappeared from the scene of history.

But Nietzsche, though far from any kind of racial anti-Semitism, does indeed see in Judaism the cradle of Christianity and in the latter, justly but with revulsion, the germ of democracy, of the French Revolution, and



of those hateful "modern ideas" that his resounding prose brands as the morality of herd-animals. "Shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen, and other democrats," he says, for he sees the origins of "modern ideas" in England (the French, he claims, were only their soldiers); and what he despises and curses in these ideas is their utilitarianism and their eudaemonism, their elevation of peace and earthly happiness to the highest objects of desire—whereas it is just these base and effeminate values that the noble, tragic, heroic man kicks under his feet.

This latter is inevitably a warrior, hard with himself and with others, ready to sacrifice himself and others. The primary reproach he makes against Christianity is that it has raised the individual to such importance that one could no longer *sacrifice* him. The race, he declares, survives only by human sacrifice and Christianity is a principle that goes counter to natural selection. It has actually lowered and weakened the power, the responsibility, the high obligation to sacrifice human beings; and for thousands of years, until the arrival of Nietzsche, Christianity prevented the development of that energy of greatness which "by breeding—and on the other hand by destroying millions of misfits—shapes the man of the future and does not go to ruin amid the unprecedented misery created by it."

Who was it that recently had the power to assume this responsibility, who impudently thought themselves capable of such greatness, and unfalteringly fulfilled the high obligation to sacrifice millions of human beings? A horde of megalomaniacal petty bourgeois, at the sight of whom Nietzsche would immediately have succumbed to an extreme case of migraine with all its accompanying symptoms.

**H** E DID not live to see it. Nor did he see another war later than the old-fashioned one of 1870 with its chassepots and needle rifles. He could therefore, out of sheer hatred for the Christian and democratic philanthropic promotion of happiness, luxuriate in a glorification of war that sounds to us today like the babble of an over-excited boy. That a good cause justifies war is much too moralistic for him: it is a good war that justifies any *cause*. "The scale of values by which the

various forms of society are judged today," he writes, "is completely identical with the one that assigns a higher value to *peace* than to war: but this judgment is anti-biological, is itself a spawn of life's decadence. . . . Life is a consequence of war, society itself a means for war."

Never a thought that perhaps it might not be a bad idea to try and make something else of society than a means for war. For Nietzsche society is a product of nature that, like life itself, rests on amoral premises; to attack these premises is equivalent to a treacherous attack on life itself. "One has renounced the great life," he exclaims, "when one has renounced war." And one has also renounced civilization; for, in order to be reinvigorated, the latter must relapse into thorough barbarism and it is vain sentimentality to expect anything more in the way of civilization and greatness from humanity once it has forgotten how to make war.

Nietzsche despised all nationalist narrowness. But this contempt was apparently the esoteric prerogative of a few individuals. For he describes outbreaks of self-sacrificial nationalist power-delirium with a kind of rapture that leaves no doubt that for the nations, the masses, he wants to preserve the "mighty hallucination" of nationalism.

A parenthetical remark is necessary here. We have had the experience that, under certain circumstances, unconditional pacifism can be a more than doubtful thing, that it can be base and deceitful. For years, all over Europe and the world, it was the mask of fascist sympathies; true friends of peace recognized that the Munich pact, which the democracies concluded with fascism in 1938, ostensibly to save all countries from war, was the lowest point of European history. The war against Hitler, or rather the mere readiness for it that would have been enough for their purposes, was ardently desired by the true friends of peace. But if we picture to ourselves—and the picture rises inexorably before our eyes!—how much ruin, in every sense of that word, is caused even by a war fought for the sake of humanity, how much demoralization, and what an unchaining it permits of greedy, egotistical, and anti-social impulses; if, taught by what has already been experienced, we roughly picture to ourselves what the world would look like—will look like—after the next, the third world



war—then Nietzsche's rodomontades on the selective function of war as the preserver of civilization appear to us like the fantasies of an inexperienced novice, the child of a long period of peace and security protected by "gilt-edged investments," a period that begins to be bored with itself.

Besides, since he was at the same time predicting with astonishing prophetic foresight a succession of monstrous wars and explosions, yea the age of war *par excellence* ("to which those who come later will look back with envy and awe"), the humanitarian degeneration and castration of humanity apparently did not yet seem to be so dangerously advanced that mankind had to be philosophically incited to selective massacre. Did this philosophy want to eliminate the moral scruples that would stand in the way of the atrocities of the future? Did it want to make sure that humanity would be "in form" for this magnificent future? But all is done with such voluptuousness that, far from calling forth the moral protest it anticipates, it makes us, instead, sick and sorry for the noble spirit here raging wantonly against itself.

When medieval forms of torture are enumerated, described, and recommended with a titillation that has left its traces in contemporary German literature, it is no longer a question of mere education for manliness. It borders on vulgarity when, as a consideration "to console mollycoddles," he speaks of the lesser susceptibility to physical pain of lower races—the Negroes for instance. And then, when the song of the "blond beast" is intoned, of "the exulting monster," the type of man that "returns home, exuberant as after a student's prank, from the horrid performance of murder, arson, rape, torture," then the picture of infantile sadism becomes complete and our soul squirms in pain.

It was the romantic Novalis, a spirit kindred to Nietzsche's, who made the most striking criticism of this attitude. "The ideal of ethics," he says, "has no more dangerous competitor than the ideal of the strongest power, of the mightiest life, which has also been called (fundamentally very correctly, but very incorrectly interpreted) the ideal of aesthetic greatness. It is the maximum ideal of the barbarian and, unfortunately, in this age of declining civilization it has found

very many adherents precisely among the greatest weaklings. This ideal converts man into an animal-spirit, a mixture whose brutal humor is just the thing that has a brutal attraction for weaklings."

This could not be better said. Did Nietzsche know this passage? We cannot doubt that he did. But he did not let it hinder him in the intoxicated, consciously intoxicated, and therefore not seriously meant, provocations he offered to the "ideal of morality."

What Novalis calls the ideal of aesthetic greatness, the maximum ideal of the barbarian, man as an animal-spirit, is indeed Nietzsche's superman. He describes him as the "emanation of a luxuriant excess on the part of humanity, in which a more powerful strain, a higher type of human being makes its appearance, engendered and maintained under different conditions than the average man."

These are the future masters of the earth, this is the shining type of the tyrant, for whose production democracy is just right, and who, accordingly, must use democracy as his tool and introduce his new morality by linking it in a Machiavellian way with existing ethical law, by masking it under the very words of this law. For this terror-utopia of greatness, power, and beauty would much rather lie than speak the truth—lying requires more intelligence and will-power. The superman is the man "in whom the specific qualities of life—injustice, lies, exploitation—are strongest."

IT WOULD be the greatest inhumanity to meet all these shrill and agonized challenges with contempt and mockery—and it would be sheer stupidity to answer them with moral indignation. We are face to face here with the fate of a Hamlet, a tragic destiny involving a knowledge unbearably deep, a destiny that inspires awe and compassion. "I believe," Nietzsche says somewhere, "I have correctly divined a few elements in the soul of the supreme man—it may be that everyone who divines him correctly is destroyed." He was destroyed by it, and the horrors of his doctrine are too variously pervaded by an infinitely moving, lyrical sorrow, by deeply loving glances, by the notes of a most melancholy yearning that the arid, rainless land of his solitude should feel the dew of love—for scorn or revulsion



to dare manifest itself before such an *ecce homo* picture.

Yet our respect for him does indeed find itself somewhat hard pressed when that "socialism of the subjugated castes," which Nietzsche mocked a hundred times and branded as a poisonous foe of the higher life, in the end demonstrates to us that his superman was nothing but an idealization of the fascist Fuehrer, and that he himself, in all his philosophizing, was pacemaker, co-creator, and idea-prompter of European—of world fascism. Incidentally, I am inclined here to reverse cause and effect and instead of believing that Nietzsche created fascism, to hold that fascism created him—that is to say: remote at bottom from politics, and being all spirit, he functioned as an infinitely sensitive instrument of expression and registration; his philosophy of power was a presentiment of the rise of imperialism, and like a quivering needle he announced the fascist era of the West in which we now live and shall continue to live for a long time to come, despite our military victory over fascism.

As a thinker who from the very beginning seceded with his entire being from the bourgeois world, he seems to have affirmed the fascist component of the post-bourgeois age and denied the socialist one: because the latter was the moral one and because he confused morality in general with bourgeois morality. But, with all his sensitivity, he was never able to shut out the influence of the socialist element on the future, and it is this fact that is not understood by the socialists who denounce him as a fascist *pur sang*. It is not quite that simple—despite all that can be said for this simplification. One thing is true: his heroic contempt of happiness, which was something very personal and of little political application, misled him into seeing a contemptible desire for the "happiness of herd-animals in a green pasture" in every aspiration to do away with the more ignoble social and economic evils, to do away with avoidable misery on earth. It is no accident that his phrase, "the dangerous life," was translated into Italian and became a part of Fascist slang. Everything he said in his extreme over-irritation with morality, humaneness, compassion, Christianity, as well as what he said in favor of the beauty of wickedness and in behalf of war and iniquity, was unfortunately well suited for a

place in the shoddy ideology of fascism. Aberrations like his "Morality for Physicians," with its recommendation that the sick be killed and the inferior castrated, his insistence on the necessity of slavery, and in addition to this many of his eugenic recommendations for selection, breeding, and marriage, actually entered into the theory and practice of National Socialism—even though, perhaps, without conscious reference to him.

If the words: "By the fruits of their deeds ye shall know them!" are true, then Nietzsche is in a bad way. In Spengler, his clever ape, the master-man of Nietzsche's dream becomes the modern "realistic man in grand style," the piratical and profit-greedy man making his way over dead bodies, the financial magnate, the armament industrialist, the German industrial general director who finances fascism—in short, in Spengler, Nietzsche is taken with stupid literalness and made the philosophical patron of imperialism, of which in reality he understood nothing at all. Otherwise how could he have made plain at every point his contempt for the peddler's and shopkeeper's spirit, which he considered pacifistic, and in opposition to it have glorified the heroic spirit of the soldier? The alliance between industrialism and militarism, that political unity which is the essence of imperialism, and the fact that it is the profit-making spirit which creates wars—these things his "aristocratic radicalism" never saw.

**WE** SHOULD not let ourselves be deceived: fascism as a trick to capture the masses, as the ultimate vulgarity and the most miserable cultural hoax that ever made history, is foreign to the very depths of the spirit of that man for whom everything centered around the question: "What is noble?" Fascism lies completely beyond his powers of imagination, and that the German middle class should have confused the Nazi assault with Nietzsche's dreams of culture-renewing barbarism was the grossest of misunderstandings. I am not speaking of Nietzsche's contemptuous disregard of all nationalism, of his hatred of the "Reich" and the stultifications of German power-politics, or of his qualities as a European, his scorn of anti-Semitism and of the entire racial swindle. What I wish to repeat is that the socialist flavor in his vision of post-bourgeois life



is just as strong as the flavor we might call fascist.

What does it mean after all when Zarathustra exclaims: "I beseech you, my brethren, remain true to earth! No longer bury your heads in the sand of heavenly things, but carry it free, an earthly head that gives meaning to the earth! . . . Lead our vanished virtues back to earth, even as I do—yea, back to life and love: that they may give meaning to the earth, human meaning!"? This means the will to pervade the material with the human, it means materialism of the spirit, it is—in the widest sense of the word—socialism.

Here and there Nietzsche's concept of civilization shows a strongly socialist coloring, certainly a coloring that is no longer bourgeois. He stands against the cleavage between educated and uneducated, and his youthful loyalty to Wagner signifies this above all: the end of Renaissance civilization, that great bourgeois age; it also means an art for high and low, an end to delights that could not be common to the hearts of all.

It does not testify to enmity toward the workers, it testifies to the contrary, when he says: "Workingmen should learn to feel like soldiers: a compensation, a salary, but not payment. They shall live one day as the middle class does now, but *above* it, distinguishing themselves by their lack of needs, as the *higher* caste, i.e. poorer and simpler, but possessed of power." And he gave odd instructions on how to make the ownership of private property more moral: "Let all ways of accumulating *small* competences by work be kept open," he says, "but prevent effortless, sudden enrichment, withdraw from the hands of private individuals and companies all branches of transport and commerce favorable to the amassing of *large* fortunes, and particularly finance—and consider public enemies those who possess too much as well as those who possess nothing." The man who possesses nothing is a dangerous beast in the eyes of the philosophical small capitalist: that stems from Schopenhauer. How dangerous the man is who possesses too much, is something Nietzsche learned and added himself.

Around 1875, that is, more than seventy years ago, he prophesied, not exactly with enthusiasm, but simply as the result of vic-

torious democracy, a European league of nations "in which each individual people, its frontiers drawn according to geographical suitability, has the position of a Swiss canton and its separate rights." At that time the perspective was as yet purely European. In the course of the following decade it expanded into the global and the universal. He spoke of the unified economic administration of the earth as unavoidably imminent. He called for as many international powers as possible—"to get used to a world perspective." His faith in Europe wavered. "Down at bottom the Europeans imagine that they now represent a higher type of human being on earth. Asiatic men are a hundred times nobler than the Europeans."

On the other hand he does believe it possible that in the world of the future spiritual influence might rest in the hands of the typical European, who would be a synthesis of the European past in the person of the highest, most spiritual type. "Mastery over the earth—Anglo-Saxon. The German element a good leaven, it does not know how to rule." Then again he foresees the intermingling of the German and Slavic races, and Germany as a pre-Slavic station in history, preparing the way for a Pan-Slavic Europe. The rise of Russia as a world power is entirely clear to him: "The power shared between Slavs and Anglo-Saxons, with Europe in the role of Greece under the domination of Rome."

These are striking results for an excursion into world politics made by a mind essentially concerned only with the task laid upon civilization of producing the philosopher, the artist, and the saint. At a distance of almost a century he saw just about what we see today. For the world, the newly forming concept of the world, was a unity, and wherever, in whatever direction this enormous sensibility turned and groped, it sensed the new, the coming, and registered it. Purely intuitively, Nietzsche anticipated the results of modern physics by combatting the mechanistic interpretation of the world, by denying a causally determined world, the classical "laws of nature," "natural laws," and the repetition of identical cases. "There is no second time." Nor is there any calculation according to which a determined cause must be followed by a determined effect. The interpretation of events according to cause and



effect is false. What is involved is a struggle between two elements of unequal power, a new distribution of forces whereby the new situation becomes something fundamentally different from the old, and by no means its effect. Dynamics therefore, instead of logic and mechanics.

Nietzsche's "scientific intuitions," to paraphrase Helmholtz's remark about Goethe, have a spiritual tendency, they strain toward something, they fit into his philosophy of power, his anti-rationalism, and serve him in raising life above law—because law as such already has something "moral" in it. Whatever the present fate of this tendency, Nietzsche has been proven right as far as the natural sciences go; for these, "law" has in the meantime been weakened to mere probability, and they have lost a great deal of their faith in the concept of causality.

As is the case with every other idea he had, his ideas on physics took Nietzsche right out of the bourgeois world of classical rationality into a new one where he himself became the most alien guest of all because of his ancestry. Any socialism that refuses to give him credit for this arouses one's suspicion that that socialism is far more bourgeois than it is aware of being. The notion of Nietzsche as an aphorist without a central core must be abandoned: his philosophy is just as completely an organized system as Schopenhauer's, developed from one single fundamental, all-pervading thought. But this fundamental and initial idea is, of course, radically aesthetic in nature—which is alone enough to put his insight and thought into inevitable and irreconcilable opposition to any kind of socialism.

In the last analysis there are but two mental and inner attitudes: an aesthetic and a moral one, and socialism is a strictly moral way of looking at the world. Nietzsche, on the other hand, was the most complete and unredeemable aesthete known to the history of the human mind, and his premise, which contains his Dionysian pessimism—i.e. that life can be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon—applies most exactly to himself, to his life, and to his work as a thinker and poet. Only as an aesthetic phenomenon can this life be justified, understood, honored; consciously, down to the self-mythologization of his last moment and even in insanity,

it was an artistic spectacle, not only in its wonderful expression, but also in its innermost essence—a lyrical-tragical drama of the utmost fascination.

It is remarkable enough, though quite comprehensible, that the first form in which the European spirit rebelled against the collective morality of the bourgeois era was aestheticism. It was not without reason that I spoke of Nietzsche and Wilde in one breath—they belong together as rebels, particularly as rebels in the name of beauty, even though the revolt of the German breaker of the law-tablets went incalculably deeper and cost him immensely more in suffering, renunciation, and self-conquest.

I HAVE read in the writings of socialist critics, especially Russian ones, that Nietzsche's aesthetic *aperçus* and judgments were often of an admirable subtlety, but that in matters of political morality he was a barbarian. This distinction is naive, for Nietzsche's glorification of the barbaric is nothing more than an excess of his aesthetic intoxication, and reveals indeed a proximity that we have every reason to ponder well: the proximity of aestheticism and barbarism. Toward the end of the 19th century, their sinister closeness was not yet seen, felt, or feared—otherwise Georg Brandes, a Jew and a liberal writer, could not have come upon the "aristocratic radicalism" of the German philosopher as a new nuance and delivered lectures propagandizing for it: which is evidence of the sense of security still reigning at that time, of the carefreeness of the bourgeois era as it declined toward its close. But it is also evidence that the skilled Danish critic did not take Nietzsche's barbarism seriously, at its face value, and that he understood it *cum grano salis*—in which he was very right.

Nietzsche's aestheticism, which is a furious denial of the spirit in favor of a beautiful, strong, and wicked life—the self-denial, that is, of a man who suffered deeply from life—infused his philosophical outpourings with something far-fetched, irresponsible, undependable, and passionately playful, an element of deepest irony that foils the understanding of the simpler reader. Not only is that which he offers art—there is an art also in reading him, and no clumsy or straightforward approach is admissible; all



sorts of subtlety, irony, and reserve are required in reading him. Anyone who takes Nietzsche at "face value," literally, anyone who believes him, is lost. His case is, in truth, like Seneca's—Seneca, to whom, he says, one should give ear but never "trust and faith."

Are examples necessary here? The reader of the *Case of Wagner*, for instance, will find it hard to believe his eyes when, in a letter addressed to the musician Carl Fuchs in 1888, he reads: "You must not take what I say about Bizet seriously; the way I am, Bizet is not even remotely worth consideration. But he is extremely effective as an ironical antithesis to Wagner. . . ." This is all that is left, speaking "confidentially," of the rapturous eulogy of *Carmen* in the *Case of Wagner*. This is startling, but only the least of it. In another letter to the same correspondent he gives advice on how he could be best written about as a psychologist, an author, and an immoralist: not judging him with "yes" and "no," but characterizing him with intellectual impartiality. "It is *not* at all necessary, not even *desirable*, to take my side in doing so: on the contrary, a dose of curiosity, as before a strange flower, with a bit of ironical disagreement, would seem to me to be an incomparably *more intelligent* attitude toward me.—Excuse me! I have just written some naive things—a little recipe on how to extricate oneself successfully from something *impossible*. . . ."

Has any author ever *warned* us against himself in a stranger manner? "Anti-liberal to the point of spite," he called himself. Anti-liberal *because of* spite, because of an urge to provoke, would be more correct. When the hundred days' emperor, Frederick III—the liberal who married an English princess—died in 1888, Nietzsche was affected and depressed, like all German liberals. "He was after all a small glimmer of *free* thought, Germany's last hope. Now begins the regime Stoecker:—I draw the consequences and already *know* that now my *Will to Power* will be confiscated in Germany. . . ."

Well, nothing was confiscated. The spirit of the liberal era was still too strong, everything could still be said in Germany. However, there crops up unexpectedly in Nietzsche's mourning for Frederick something quite plain, simple, unparadoxical—one might say: the truth: the natural love of

the spiritual human being, of the writer, for the *freedom* that is the very breath of his life—and all of a sudden the entire aesthetic phantasmagoria of slavery, war, brute force, and lordly cruelty stands somewhere far off as irresponsible play and colorful theory.

All his life he execrates the "theoretical man," but he himself is the theoretical man *par excellence* and in his purest form; his thinking is an absolute manifestation of his genius, unpragmatical to an extreme, devoid of any pedagogical responsibility, profoundly unpolitical. It is, to be honest, *without* relation to life, that dearly beloved life which he defended and raised above every other value. Nietzsche never worried in the least about how his teachings would look in practical, political reality.

The ten thousand doctrinaires of the irrational who, under his shadow, sprouted from the ground like mushrooms all over Germany, worried just as little. Small wonder! For nothing could have been essentially better suited to the German nature than Nietzsche's aesthetical theorizing. True, he flung his sulphurous bolts of criticism against the Germans, too, those "corrupters of European history," and in the end gave them credit for nothing good whatsoever. But who, finally, was more German than he, who so beautifully demonstrated to the Germans once again all those things that have made them a scourge and terror to the world and by which they themselves have been ruined: romantic passion, the urge to let the ego forever expand into the limitless without setting it a fixed object, the will that is free because it has no aim and strays into the infinite? Drunkenness and the suicidal inclination are what Nietzsche called the characteristic vices of the Germans, whose danger lay in everything that fettered the powers of reason and released the passions; "for the German's emotion is directed against his own welfare and is self-destructive like that of the drunkard. Enthusiasm as such is of less value in Germany than elsewhere, for there it is sterile." What does Zarathustra call himself? "Knower of the self—hangman of the self."

NIETZSCHE has become historical in more than one sense. He has made history, frightful history, and he did not exaggerate when he called himself "something fatal."



For aesthetic effect, though, he did exaggerate his loneliness. He belongs, in an extremely German way, it is true, to a movement general throughout the West—a movement that includes names like Kierkegaard, Bergson, and many others among its adherents, and which is a spiritual and historical rebellion against the faith of the 18th and 19th centuries in classical rationalism. This movement has achieved its object—or has failed to do so only to the degree that its necessary continuation is the reconstitution of human reason on a new basis, the winning of a new notion of humanitarianism that would have more depth to it than the smug, shallow one of the bourgeois age.

The defense of instinct against reason and consciousness was a passing correction. The permanent correction, the eternally necessary one, remains the one exercised on life by the spirit, or, if one so wants, by morality. How time-bound, how theoretical, how inexperienced Nietzsche's romanticizing about wickedness appears to us today! We have learned to know it in all its miserableness and are no longer aesthetic enough to fear professing our faith in the good, or to be ashamed of ideas and guides so banal as truth, liberty, and justice.

The aestheticism under whose banner free spirits revolted against bourgeois morality belongs in the end to the bourgeois age itself. To leave that age behind means going from an aesthetic era to a moral and social one.

Although Nietzsche's genius has contributed much to the creation of our new atmosphere, an aesthetic philosophy of life is fundamentally incapable of mastering the problems we are now called upon to solve. At one time Nietzsche supposed that *religious* forces might still be strong enough in the future world of his vision to produce an atheistic religion *à la* Buddha that would glide over denominational differences—and that science itself would have nothing against a new ideal. "But," he adds as a precaution, "this will not be the general love of man!"

**A**ND yet what if it were to be just that? It would not have to be that optimistic and idyllic love of "humankind" to which the 18th century vowed gentle tears—and to

which, by the way, civilization owes an enormous progress. When Nietzsche proclaimed: "God is dead"—a decree that meant to him the hardest of all sacrifices—in whose honor, for the sake of whose enhancement did he do this, if not man's? If he was an atheist, then he contrived to be one—no matter how sentimentally pastoral this may sound—because of his love for humankind. He must put up with being called a humanist, just as he must endure having his criticism of morality understood as a last stage of the Enlightenment. The extra-denominational religiousness he mentions I cannot conceive of as other than bound to the idea of man, as a religiously founded and accented humanism that, because of its richness of knowledge and experience, would include everything known about the infernal and demoniac in the esteem it paid to the human mystery.

Religion is reverence, reverence first of all for the mystery that is man. When a new order, new ties, and the adaptation of human society to the requirements of a fateful moment in world history are at stake, then indeed the decisions of conferences, technical measures, and juridical institutions become of little avail, and world government remains a rational utopia. What is necessary first of all is a change in the spiritual climate, a sense of the difficulty and nobility of human existence, an all-pervading, fundamental conviction from which no one will be exempted and which everyone deep inside himself will recognize as his judge. The poet and artist, imperceptibly working down from above and affecting ever wider areas as they go, can contribute something to the creation of this. Yet these things are not taught and made; they are experienced and suffered.

That philosophy is no cold abstraction, but is experience, suffering, and sacrifice for the sake of humanity—this was Nietzsche's knowledge and example. He was driven far afield into grotesque fallacies, but the future was in truth the land of his love, and for posterity, as for us whose youth is incalculably indebted to him, he will stand as a figure, tender, tragic, and venerable, enveloped by the flashing summer lightning that heralds the dawn of a new time.